



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

AUG 16 2017

OFFICE OF  
RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Honorable Bill Cassidy, M.D.  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cassidy:

Thank you for your June 23, 2017, letter to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regarding the EPA's Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) Program and recommendations for implementation of language included in Senate Report 114-281 that was incorporated into the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2017.

We have begun taking steps to address the recommendations in the Senate Report. Specifically, we have contacted the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs (OIRA) within the Office of Management and Budget to discuss a strategy for moving ahead that takes advantage of an already existing IRIS interagency review group. Recent EPA assessments fully adhere to best practices in systematic review and thus address key recommendations from the 2011 and 2014 National Academy of Sciences (NAS) reports, and we look forward to sharing these and other advances with the interagency working group.

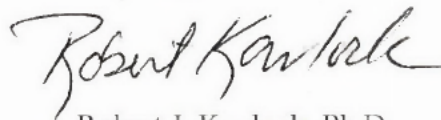
EPA's IRIS Program provides the scientific foundation to inform decisions under a variety of statutory authorities, including the Comprehensive Environmental Recovery, Compensation, and Liability Act, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Clean Air Act. As you indicated, the passage of the amended Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) creates a significant responsibility for the Office of Pollution Prevention and Toxics (OPPT) in the Office of Chemical Safety and Pollution Prevention (OCSPP) to lead high priority chemical evaluations in a fairly compressed timeline. IRIS has already been collaborating with OCSPP to build capacity, operationalize systematic review, and create an assessment workflow that can assist OCSPP to meet TSCA implementation requirements. We look forward to building on these foundational collaborations and to providing support, as needed, for specific TSCA chemical evaluations. We anticipate providing this support as we maintain IRIS's ability to meet other EPA program and regional office needs, including Superfund.

In response to the 2011 NAS report, we embarked on an effort to improve the IRIS Program and were gratified that the 2014 NAS report commended EPA's actions and noted that IRIS has made "substantial improvements...and it is clear that EPA has embraced and is acting on the recommendations in the NRC formaldehyde report."

It is important to note that the NAS has never recommended EPA stop or delay ongoing assessment activities; rather, we should incorporate recommended improvements to the program as they are developed because, as noted by the NAS, some of these recommendations would take "several years and an extensive effort by EPA staff to implement." As with method development in any field, implementation of newer approaches does not invalidate conclusions from prior assessments.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me, or your staff may contact Christina Moody in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at [moody.christina@epa.gov](mailto:moody.christina@epa.gov) or 202-564-0260.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Kavlock". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Kavlock" clearly distinguishable.

Robert J. Kavlock, Ph.D.  
Acting Assistant Administrator